

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

**USE EXCLUSION**

(Acre)  
CODE 472

**DEFINITION**

Excluding animals, people or vehicles from an area.

**PURPOSES**

To prevent, restrict, or control access to an area to maintain or improve the quantity and quality of natural resources or minimize liability and human health concerns.

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

On all land uses where permanent or temporary use exclusion is needed.

**CRITERIA**

Barriers may consist of both natural and/or artificial structures such as logs, vegetation, earth fill, boulders, fences, gates, electronic or sonic devices, or signs.

Barriers must be adequate to prevent use by vehicles, animals or people.

Barrier life expectancy must be adequate for the intended purpose.

Timing and exclusion periods must be described to accomplish intended purposes.

To prevent accidents associated with the use of vehicles, barriers associated with roads and trails shall be adequately marked to safeguard human safety and minimize the risk of liability.

Comply with applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations during the installation, operation and maintenance of this practice.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

All areas should consider existing or potential liability to the planning agency or the landuser based on safety, health and public relations.

Public use may be an issue in areas where public right of access has previously been established by past use and law.

Barrier type and design should account for and minimize impact to impair wildlife health and animal movement.

Barriers should account for and minimize public safety activities such as fire control.

**Planning Considerations**

Exclusions should be located to provide additional benefits where applicable.

Aesthetics shall be a consideration in the placement of barriers.

The exclusions should be maintained to provide protection as long as needed to achieve the desired results in the area. Use exclusion may be applied with Prescribed Grazing (Practice Standard 528) to meet stated objectives. In wooded areas, fencing should be inspected for damage periodically and repaired as needed.

Exclude livestock from:

1. In newly seeded, planted or naturally restocked woodland or forest land, the exclusion will be maintained until the plantings have grown sufficiently that grazing will not be harmful. It is generally considered that three feet in height is sufficient to protect trees from sheep, and six feet from cattle.
2. Areas abused by overgrazing and/or soil compaction for several years, in order to promote an increase in understory vegetation, and reduce soil compaction.
3. Wet areas, and areas made up of soils susceptible to critical erosion.
4. Watersheds used for municipal and domestic water supply where grazing will be detrimental.

5. Recreation areas where use by livestock would be detrimental to environmental, aesthetic or recreation goals.
6. Critical habitat for endangered plants or animals and other wildlife where grazing will be detrimental.
7. Stockwater storage facilities.

### **Endangered Species Considerations**

Determine if installation of this practice with any others proposed will have any effect on any federal or state listed Rare, Threatened or Endangered species or their habitat. NRCS's objective is to benefit these species and others of concern or at least not have any adverse effect on a listed species. If the Environmental Evaluation indicates the action may adversely affect a listed species or result in adverse modification of habitat of listed species which has been determined to be critical habitat, NRCS will advise the land user of the requirements of the Endangered Species Act and recommend alternative conservation treatments that avoid the adverse effects. Further assistance will be provided only if the landowner selects one of the alternative conservation treatments for installation; or at the request of the landowners, NRCS may initiate consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service and/or California Department of Fish and Game. If the Environmental Evaluation indicates the action will not affect a listed species or result in adverse modification of critical habitat, consultation generally will not apply and usually would not be initiated. Document any special considerations for endangered species in the Practice Requirements Worksheet.

Some species are year-round residents in some streams, such as, freshwater shrimp. Other species, such as steelhead and salmon, utilize streams during various seasons. Be aware that during critical periods, such as spawning, eggs in gravels, and rearing of young may preclude activities in the stream that may directly affect the stream habitat during those periods. For example there should be no disturbance of stream gravel beds that may have eggs in them. That could include any equipment in the stream or even walking in the stream or work upstream that may result in sediment depositing in the gravel beds. Document any special considerations for endangered species in the Practice Requirements Worksheet.

### **Cultural Resources Considerations**

Determine if installation of this practice with any others proposed will have any effect on any cultural resources. NRCS's objective is to avoid any effect to cultural resources and protect them in their original location. GM 420, Part 401, the California Environmental Handbook and the training for the California Environmental Assessment Worksheet specify how the NRCS must account for cultural resources. The Field Office Technical Guide, Section II contains general information, with Web sites for additional information, about cultural resources. The Environmental Handbook is online at [www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov/rts/rts.html](http://www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov/rts/rts.html).

### **Water Quantity**

This practice has a negligible effect on the quantity of ground and surface water.

### **Water Quality**

Livestock exclusion may improve water quality by preventing livestock from being in the water or walking down the banks, and by preventing manure deposition in the stream. The amount of sediment and manure may be reduced in the surface water. This practice prevents compaction of the soil by livestock and prevents losses of vegetation and undergrowth. This may maintain or increase evapotranspiration. Increased permeability may reduce erosion and lower sediment and substance transportation to the surface waters. Shading along streams and channels resulting from the application of this practice may reduce surface water temperature.

### **PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

Specifications for applying this practice shall be prepared for each site and recorded using approved specification sheets, job sheets, and narrative statements in the conservation plan, or other acceptable documentation.

### **Specifications guide**

Specifications will include what is to be excluded, period of exclusion, what are the primary purposes of the exclusion and what methods are to be used.

Areas selected for exclusion may require fencing, and if so, the fencing should be planned and installed to conform to Practice Standard 382-Fence.

**OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

Barriers will be periodically inspected and repairs performed as needed.